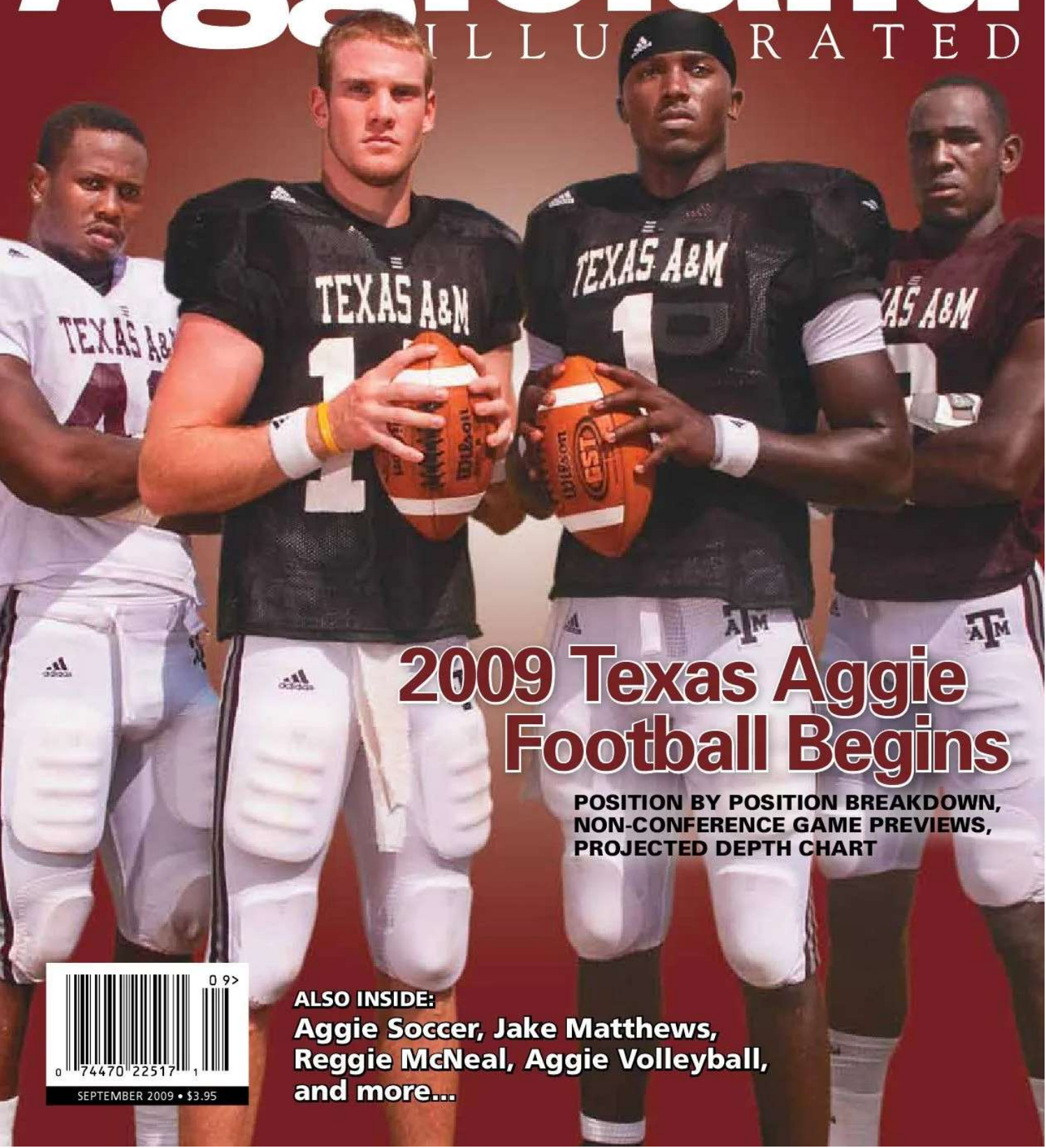


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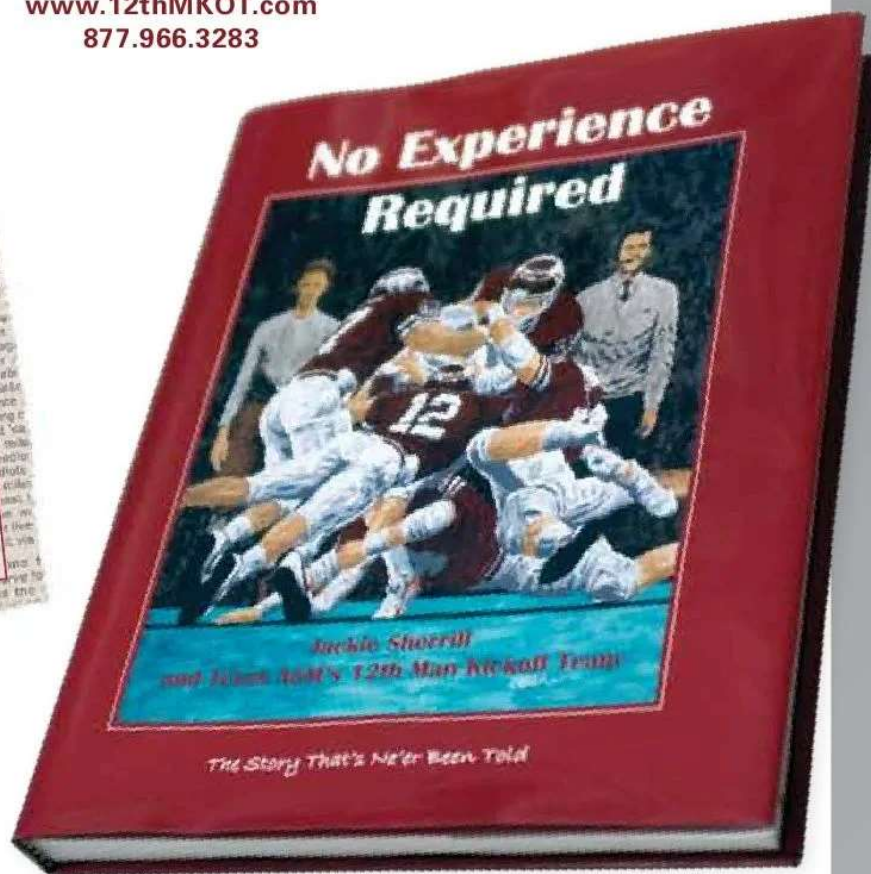
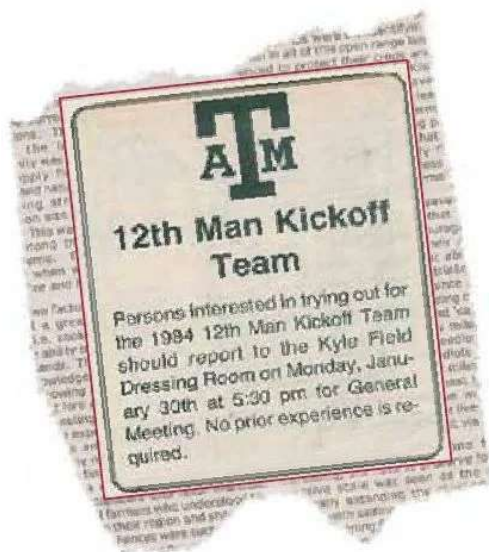
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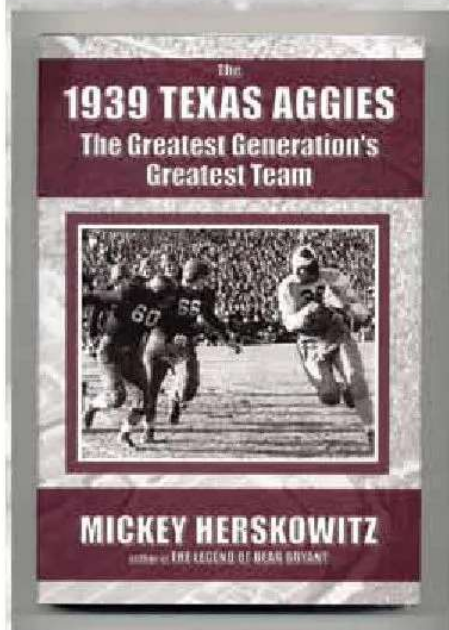
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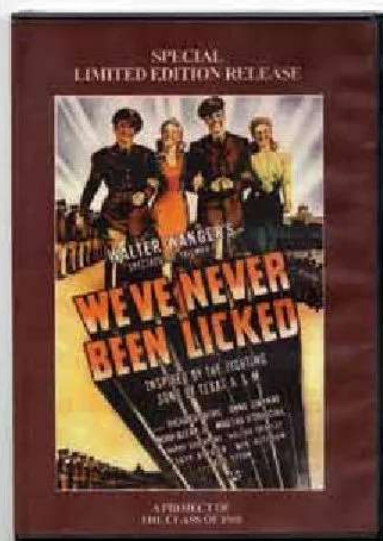
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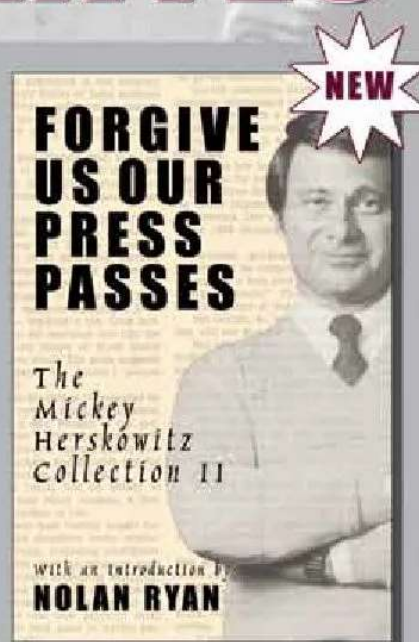
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On the Cover: Junior Von Miller, sophomore Ryan Tannehill, junior Jerrod Johnson and sophomore Jeff Fuller. Photo by Jason McConnell '01.

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Do you recognize the above photo from campus? Send an e-mail to photo@aggiemag.com and let us know where it was taken. Be the first to get it right and we'll send you a free copy of the book *Standing for America: The Spirit of Kyle Field*. Look for the answer in the next issue of *AI*. The photo in the August 09 issue was "The Spirit of Bonfire" monument – a gift from the class of 1987.

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Howdy!

I'm excited. I'm excited because it's finally time for some Fightin' Texas Aggie football. I'm excited about the possibilities of our young team and program. I don't care what the "experts" say. I can't help but have optimism about a new season and a fresh start. A new opportunity to shock the world and put Aggie football back on the map.

I'm excited about all of the talented underclassmen in our football program. Will they be up to the challenge this season? That's the million dollar question, of course. Never before have I seen an A&M team be this far off the national radar. Yet, I'm optimistic that this is the year we see a turnaround on the field. I'm not talking about rising to the top of the Big 12 by any means. But I can't envision us on the bottom either. Do I sound crazy? Perhaps, but I just can't help it. **Get your Aggie football fix beginning on page 27.**

I'm also excited about our soccer and volleyball programs. Coach G and the soccer girls have their eyes set on breaking the barrier into the Final Four, which just happens to be in College Station this year, while Coach Corbelli has the leadership and talent in place to put an end to the program's NCAA tournament drought. **Flip to page 18 for soccer and 21 for volleyball.**

Obviously, I'm excited. So let's get started already!

Gig'em Ags!

Brian '01

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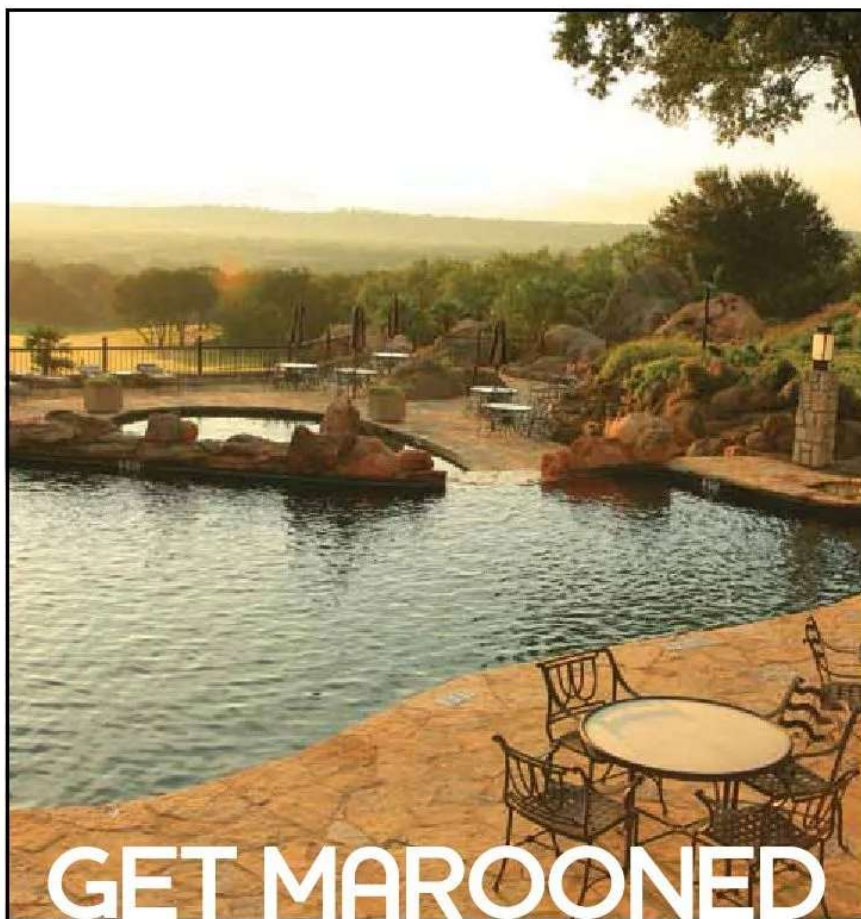
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drill sergeant

Defensive coordinator Joe Kines provides some words of encouragement as freshman linebacker Kyle Mangan takes on senior fullback Ryan O'Bryant in the Aggie Drill. Head coach Mike Sherman and coach Kirk Doll also watch as Mangan shows why he rarely, if ever, loses an Aggie Drill. Photo by Brian Davis '01.









be like mike

From the very first day of fall practice, true freshman running back Christine Michael has continued to impress teammates and wow spectators with his work ethic, violent running style and ability to make something out of nothing. Aggie fans can't wait to see Michael on Kyle Field this fall.

Photo by Jason McConnell '01.



snapshot

heads up

Senior Amber Gnatzig soars high in the air for the header during Texas A&M's exhibition match against UAB. The Aggies easily won the contest and followed it up a week later with a 3-0 victory over No. 8 USC to officially open the 2009 season, setting the tone for what could be a very special year.

Photo by Jason McConnell '01.




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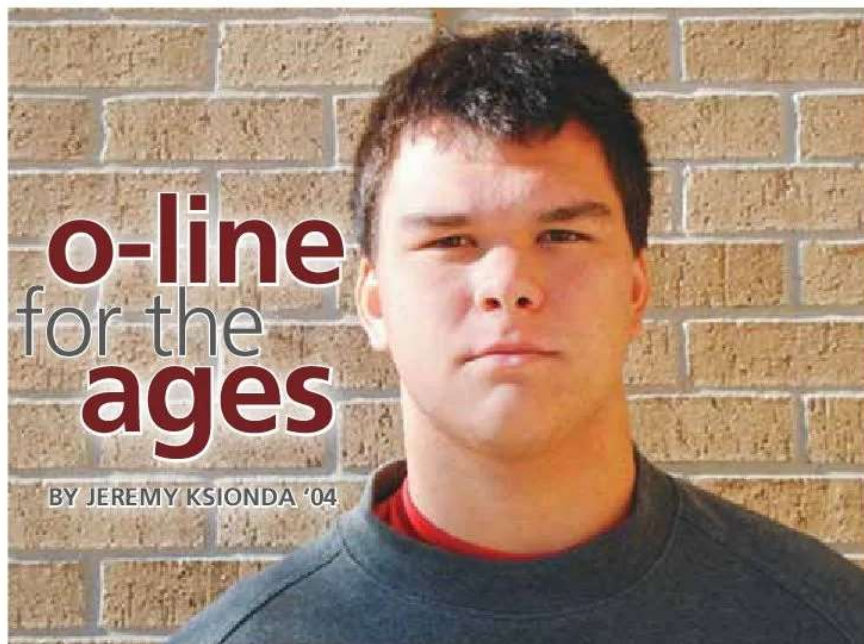
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The month of July was kind to Mike Sherman and the Aggies on the recruiting trail. In the August issue of *AI*, we featured nationally ranked linebacker Corey Nelson and his pledge to wear maroon and white. Shortly after that amazing achievement, the Aggies received a commitment from Elkins' Jake Matthews – the state's top ranked offensive lineman and the number six prospect on Billy Liucci's top 110 list in 2010.

Matthews is the son of former Houston Oiler and NFL Hall of Famer Bruce Matthews, and is an accomplished young lineman who will be able to line up at virtually any position along the line at the next level. While many believed that Matthews would ultimately choose between the Aggies, Longhorns and USC Trojans, the truth of the matter was that he had his pick of any school in the country that he wished to attend.

In the end, Matthews' commitment came down to his belief in Sherman's ability to turn around the Aggie program and prepare him for the next level.

"I just really like where the program is heading," Matthews said in an interview with the *Maroon & White Report* at *Texags.com*. "My brother (starting A&M

center Kevin Matthews) goes there and I just have a great feel for the school, the players and coaches. For me, it was the right place to go and I'm pretty excited about it."

The opportunity to play for Sherman and offensive line coach Jim Turner was too much for Matthews to pass up.

"With my brother playing for Coach Turner, I've just heard great things about him and his ability to develop linemen," he added. "When you combine that with Coach Sherman's background at the position, it's something that's really exciting to me. Playing on the offensive line at Texas A&M is going to give me a great chance to succeed at that level."

Matthews' commitment has been the cherry on top of what was already an outstanding offensive line haul for the Aggies in the class of 2010. When Allen's Cedric Ogbuehi, Katy's Shep Klinke, Denton's Garrett Gramling and Arlington's Luke Joeckel all committed to A&M in the early spring, we said the only thing that could make this class any better would be the addition of the state's top ranked big man. As luck – and the hard work of the Aggie coaching staff – would have it, Aggie fans everywhere got their wish. **AI**

For complete coverage of Texas A&M recruiting, contact Billy Liucci of the *Maroon & White Report* at (979) 690-7361 or by visiting www.texags.com

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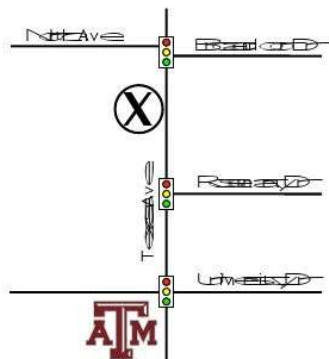
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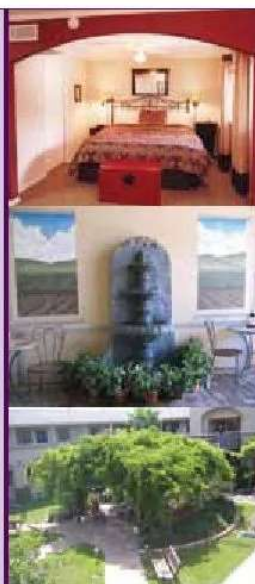


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<p>6</p> <p>8 @Saint Mary's 11 am</p> <p>@San Francisco 7 pm</p>	<p>7</p> <p>Labor Day</p>	<p>8</p> <p>Italian National Team 6:30 pm</p>			<p>11</p> <p>Texas A&M "Mo" Morial All Day</p> <p>@William H. Tucker Invitational All Day</p> <p>Hofstra (San Marcos) 10 am</p> <p>Texas Southern (San Marcos) 5 pm</p>	<p>12</p> <p>Texas A&M "Mo" Morial All Day</p> <p>@William H. Tucker Invitational All Day</p> <p>@North Carolina 1 pm</p> <p>@Texas State 2 pm</p> <p>Texas A&M Invitational 6 pm</p>
			<p>16</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>18</p> <p>8 Portland 7 pm</p>	<p>19</p> <p>@Texas Tech 2 pm</p> <p>Utah State 6 pm</p> <p>@Branch Law Firm Dick McGuire Invitational All Day</p>
			<p>23</p> <p>Nebraska (TV) 7 pm</p>		<p>25</p> <p>@Baylor 7 pm</p>	<p>26</p> <p>UAB 6 pm</p> <p>@Missouri 6:30 pm</p>
<p>20</p> <p>@Branch Law Firm Dick McGuire Invitational All Day</p> <p>8 Sam Houston State 3 pm</p>	<p>21</p>	<p>22</p>	<p>30</p> <p>@Texas 6:30 pm</p>		<p>2</p> <p>8 Kansas 7 pm</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Arkansas (Dallas) (TV) TBA</p> <p>@Wisconsin NCAA Interregional 11 am</p> <p>Kansas 6 pm</p>
<p>27</p> <p>@NCAA Preview All Day</p> <p>8 @Oklahoma 1 pm</p>	<p>28</p> <p>@NCAA Preview All Day</p>	<p>29</p>			<p>9</p> <p>@Tar Heel Invitational All Day</p> <p>8 @Oklahoma State 7 pm</p>	<p>10</p> <p>@Tar Heel Invitational All Day</p> <p>Oklahoma State TBA</p> <p>@Baylor 7 pm</p>
<p>4</p> <p>8 Missouri 4 pm</p>			<p>7</p> <p>Kansas State 6:30 pm</p>	<p>8</p>		

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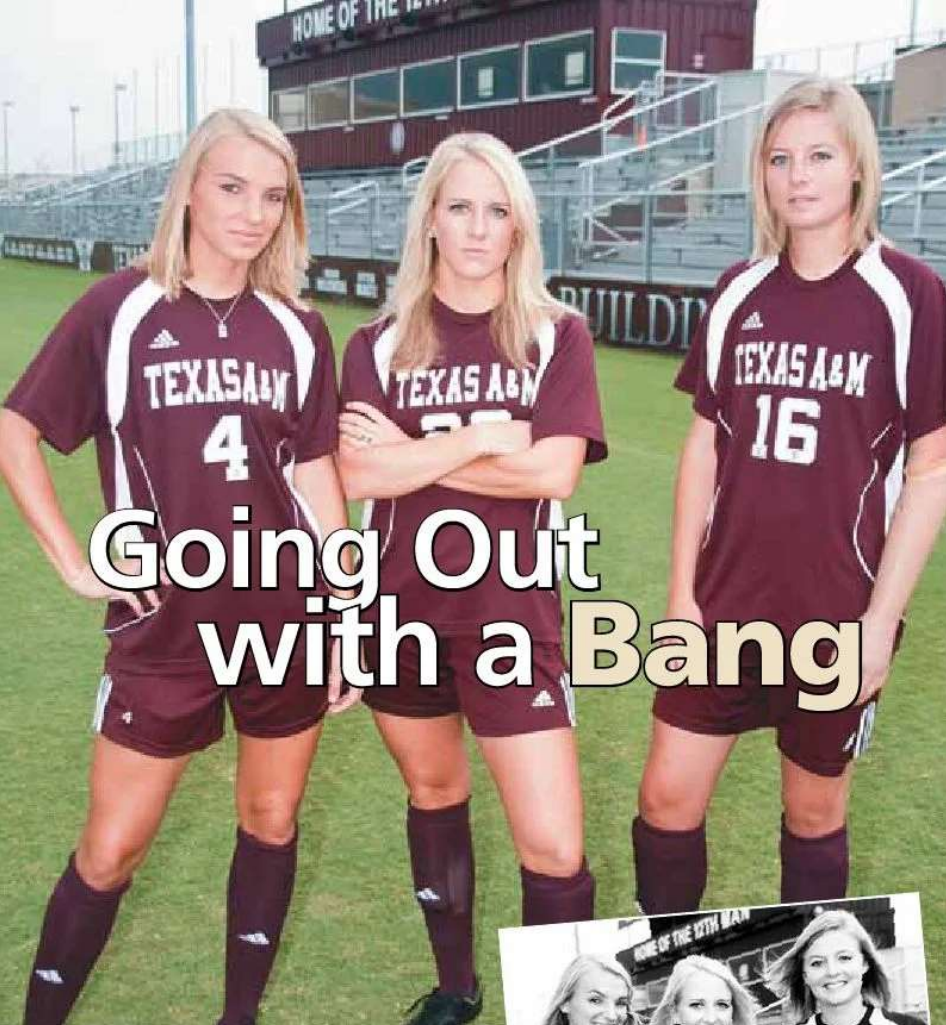
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Going Out with a Bang

Senior soccer stars aim to leave Aggieland with a national championship

BY JASON MCCONNELL '01

What are your emotions like as you begin your last season in maroon and white?

Amber Gnatzig (left): I am real excited about this senior season because we came so far last year and we have so much – not necessarily to prove but so much left to do for ourselves. We have a lot of championships left to win and what a better time to do it then our senior year.

Cydne Currie (middle): For me it is sad, but at the same time it is like your last go-round, so you have nothing to lose. It is exciting because you can put everything out on the line. It is a time for us to accomplish something great and leave a tradition.

Emily Peterson (right): If you look at all of us when we came in, we had pretty successful freshman and sophomore years, and now it is our turn to lead so that our underclassman can know what it feels like to win a Big 12 championship.

You have followed some good leaders. How does it feel to be in that role now?

CC: I am excited. You finally get to hold the reins I guess you could say. This is new for all of us. We have always had really loud personalities

and fun people. You try to fill that role but you realize that your role is entirely different and everyone is different in the way that they lead. I think it is realizing how we lead and then doing that to the best of our ability.

What has been your most memorable moment in Aggie soccer so far?

CC: The UNC game in 2006. Even being on the bench – I was pumped. I was excited. If you were on the sidelines, if you were on the field, or you were in the stands, it was just a feeling like you have never felt. Eight thousand people just cheering for you and your team. There is no other feeling like that.

AG: We were losing 2-0 to Colorado at halftime during my sophomore year. I was bleeding and I had to come out of the game and get stitched up in the first half – I had to get 7 stitches in my eye. I came back in the game in the second half and scored the 2nd goal to tie it up. We ended up coming back and beating them 4-2. It was just really exciting to me because I got to score the goal to tie up the game.

EP: Losing to North Carolina my sophomore year. It wasn't the most fun, just the most

memorable. We played well, but they are a really great team. Everyone on our team really respects them. You know, there are some teams that you just don't like. You don't necessarily respect their players or coaches as much. But North Carolina – their team is just a good team and their coach is just a good coach. The fact that we went out there and played hard and got that close – it is one of my favorite games. Even though we ended up losing, we all walked off with our heads held high. It was a fun experience. I wish we could have won though.

How tough was it to get so close to the Final Four last season and come up short?

CC: While we are doing things like lifting weights or running, someone will always make a comment about that. It is obviously something we are all still irritated about, but at the same time it is a motivator for us. We will be running and you can tell that everyone is just exhausted, but then someone says "Final Four, Elite 8, last two minutes against UNC." It is amazing what those few words will do for us. It is incredible how it can motivate and inspire us. I think as much as you can look at it as a negative thing, it is a great thing to learn from and go with and find a positive light to it.

AG: We are ready for revenge and especially since it is going to be home field advantage for us this year. That would be an awesome way to go out.

Do you look forward to meeting North Carolina in the Final Four this year?

EP: Oh yeah, I would love to.

CC: To play a team like that where the whole game you are on the edge of your seat wondering how it is going to go is really special. When we played them at their place last year, that was incredible. They had the biggest crowd they have ever had. Being there and being here, the fight back and forth – it is a long history.

How do you think you are going to feel on Senior Night?

CC: Sad. But I am excited. I think it will be a rush of emotions. It will be incredible because it is the Texas game and there's always a great crowd for that one.

What is your goal this season, other than winning a national championship?

CC: Being a good leader on and off the field. Especially at this school, you want to set a tradition. I think that is a big thing for us as a class and for us personally. We have talked about it a number of times. Really bringing what I can bring to the game and to the team, and doing it well.

EP: We have to get back to winning the Big 12. This past year was the first year we haven't won in a long time. We have to get back to that, having the freshman thinking, "this is what we do." It shouldn't be something that happens every now and then. Start a new streak. That would be a good thing.

AG: Mine, along with Cyd, is just to leave a legacy. Texas A&M has always had great teams, but I want us to be known as the best class to ever come through. I want to be known as the class that got the national championship. I want to be a part of that and leave that legacy.

CC: You just gave me goosebumps. **AI**





THREE QUESTIONS FOR COACH GUERRIERI

What have the three seniors meant to your program?

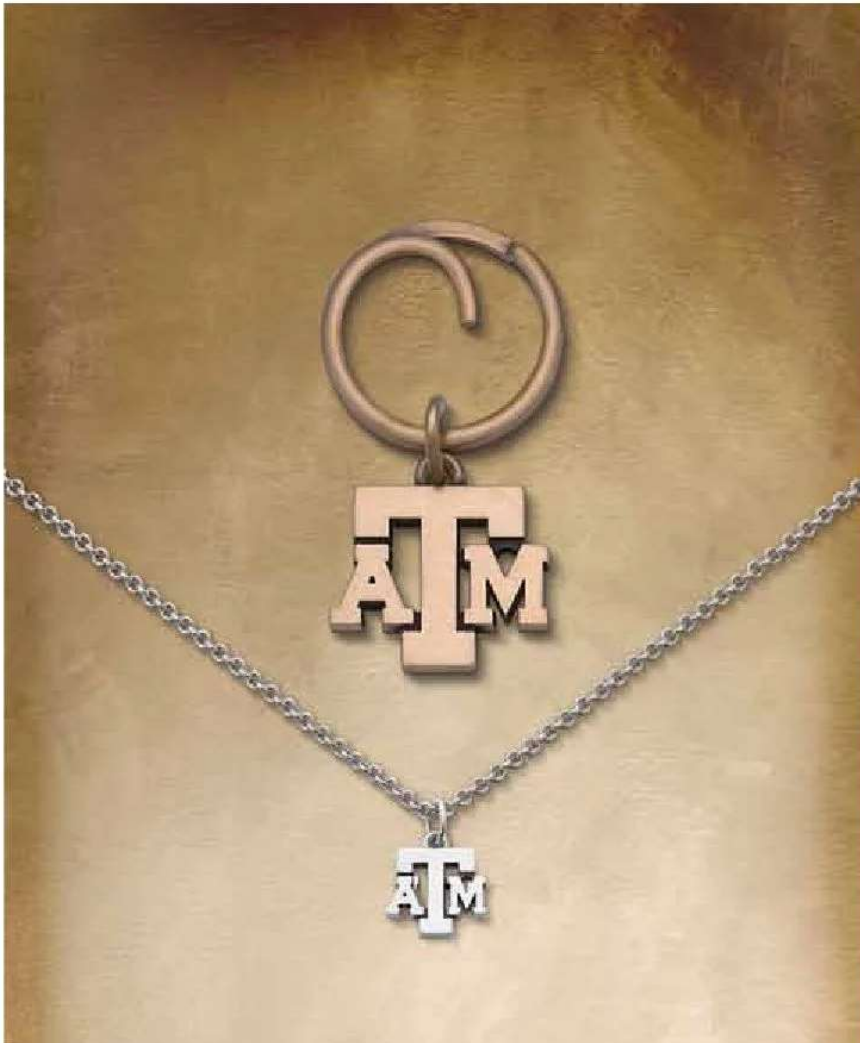
All three of them have had huge, huge impacts on the program. Emily [Peterson], as a great defender and a cool-headed smart leader. Cyd [Cydne Currie] as a burst of energy and excitement, hard worker with a lot of fire. And Amber [Gnatzig] is just our shining example of the way to get things done. As our captain she is a really great leader. She is not just this "rah-rah" fire and brimstone type of leader, she is someone that every single player on the team has the most respect for because of her work rate, how she treats other people, and for the competitive nature she brings to the table. It is a neat class and we are hoping they will be able to go out with a big bang.

How tough was the ending to last season and how does it motivate you this year?

We have been really close to the Final Four a few times. To lose in double overtime in a game we were ahead in late was tough. I said at the time that it wasn't a game we lost. It is a game that Carolina found a way to win and they did. I think it was a testament to them and you can see why they deserved to be national champions. We watched them cruise through the semifinals and finals after a tough battle with us, and we just had to shake our heads. The timing of when we met them was just a round or two off. I know the players are motivated to make it where if we are going to play one of those other elite level teams, it is on our field and it is very late in the tournament. To do that, we have to take care of business during the regular season.


Last season's freshmen had a huge impact on the team. What do you expect from them this year?

The freshman class that we brought in last year is a very special group. Four of them having all grown up playing together, having won a youth national championship with Real Colorado. We had to replace nine starters and so the opportunity for them to do it was there. Obviously, where we started the season compared to where we finished the season was very different. Now, one of the biggest differences we are seeing this season is the maturity that group has. They have an idea of what is going to happen around the corner where everything was so new to them last year. We would just wind them up every day and see how far we could take them. Now, they are well prepared and motivated just like the rest of the team to do more. They know that the opportunity to play in the NCAA tournament is there and if we could do that, the opportunity to potentially play all the games at home is there. The way we have set up the schedule is maybe one of the toughest in the country, but I have done that to make sure that when the chips are down at elimination time, that we have already seen the best. Even in games that if we don't win, it will show us about ourselves and we will be better off from it. **AI**



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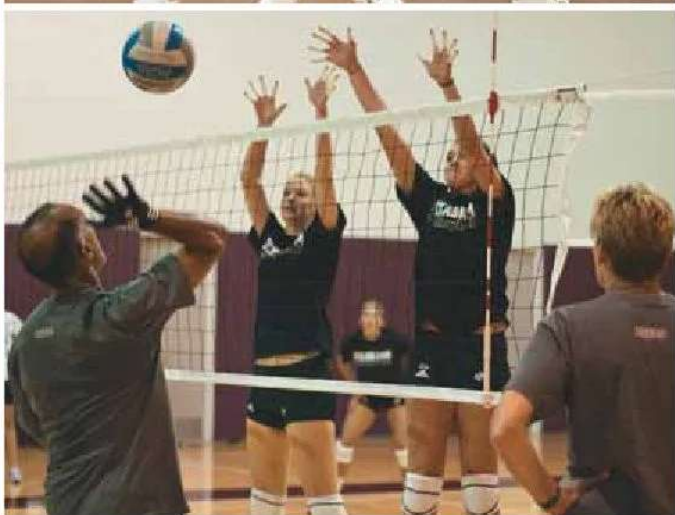
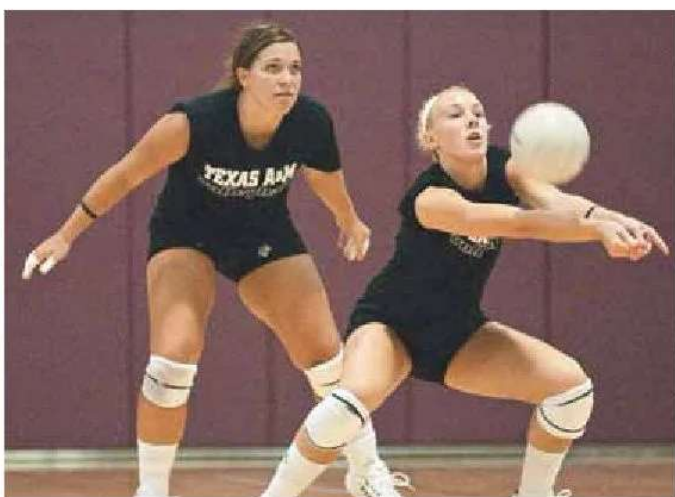
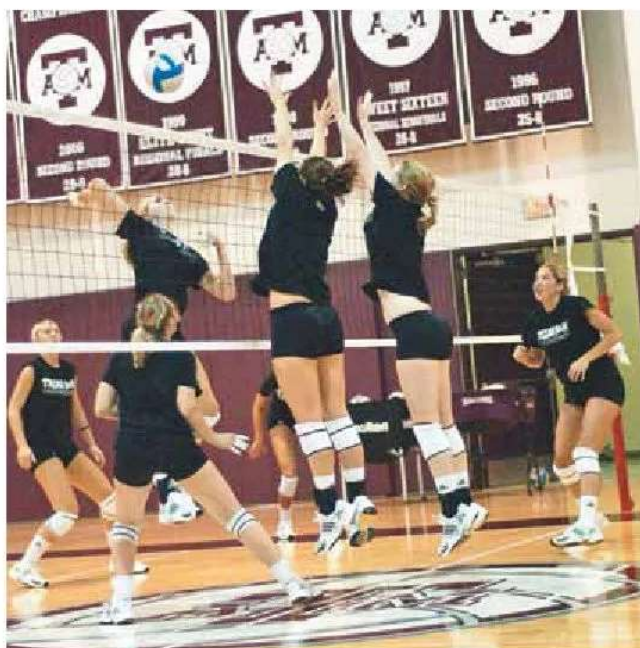
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The Aggie volleyball team looks to end NCAA tournament drought

BY JASON MCCONNELL '01



Coming off a 16-win season in 2008, the Aggie volleyball program was disappointed for the second straight year by not being invited to the NCAA tournament. However, head coach Laurie Corbelli, entering her 17th season at Texas A&M, is looking forward to a promising season.

"It is exciting to me just having so many returners as well as a super talented freshman class," Corbelli said. "Everyone was here during the summer and there was a lot of participation both in the weight room and playing on their own, and I know they are ready to show what they can do."

Returning experience and leadership will be the core of this year's team, picked to finish 4th in the Big 12. Senior outside hitters **Sarah Ammerman** and **Mary Batis**, both three year starters on the left, have been named to the preseason All-Big 12 Team for the second consecutive season. Ammerman, one of five unanimous selections on the team, was the team's MVP and top offensive player in 2008. Batis, A&M's top defensive player the

past two seasons, begins the year 11 kills away from having the 10th most kills in Aggie history.

The right side of the court also returns two starting seniors, including two-year starting setter **Kristen Schevikhoven** along with outside hitter **Jennifer Banse**. The senior leadership on the team also includes setters **Jola Kelner** and transfer **Dylan Faulkner**.

Last season saw a host of underclassmen log significant game experience. Sophomore **Kelsey Black** ended the 2008 season as the team's libero and saw action over the summer as a member of the U.S. Junior National Team. Another libero as well as backup setter, sophomore **Chelsea Ringel**, returns after playing in 27 of 30 matches last season.

Sophomore **Stephanie Minnerly** will compete against freshmen **Caitlen Adams**, **Alisia Kastmo** and **Lindsey Miller** for two middle blocker positions left vacant after Kelsey Bryant, Darla Donaldson and Jillian Phillips graduated last season. Freshman

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middle blocker and outside hitter **Abby Howden**, and PrepVolleyball.com high school All-American **Tori Mellinger** will compete for starting roles and make an immediate impact on the court. All five of A&M's incoming freshmen competed in the USA Junior Olympic Girls' Volleyball Championships over the summer.

"It is going to be real important that the freshmen establish themselves early as participants," Corbelli said. "We need them to be a big part of the season. At the same time, the returners are very ready to lead this younger group and serve as great role models and leaders so that it can perpetuate in the program into the future."

That future started with the Aggies winning the Texas A&M Invitational championship to open the season. The team will need all the preparation they can get in non-conference, because Big 12 play includes eight matches against preseason Top 25 teams, including Texas, Nebraska, Iowa State and Kansas State. Big 12 opponents Baylor and Oklahoma also received votes in the Top 25.

With the conference getting stronger and stronger from top to bottom, there won't be many easy games on the schedule this year. But if the Aggies can meet or exceed expectations, they will return to the NCAA tournament for the first time since 2004. **AJ**

JASON MCCONNELL '01

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WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

REGGIE MCNEAL

BY STEVE HUNT

From the moment he arrived on the Texas A&M campus, Reggie McNeal was met with extraordinary expectations. The ultra-talented quarterback had just capped his senior year at Lufkin High School by leading his team to a 5A state championship with a legendary individual performance. Aggie fans couldn't have been more excited for his arrival and dreamed he would lead the program back to national prominence.

One of the top recruits in the nation, McNeal played sparingly during the first nine games of his freshman season for then-head coach R.C. Slocum. Then, on November 9, 2002, against No. 1 Oklahoma, he had his coming out party.

"It was a memorable day because from the time I stepped onto the field, everything just went our way," McNeal recalled. "It doesn't get any better than to go into the Home of the 12th Man, play in front of over 80,000 and beat the No. 1 team in the nation. That was something special."

Expectations were exponentially higher after that 30-26 upset over the Sooners and McNeal earned his first start for the following game against Missouri. However, an injury against the Tigers ended his freshman season early. Following the season, Slocum, the winningest coach in Texas A&M history, was fired and replaced by Dennis Franchione.

McNeal's career was solid but never spectacular and by the time he graduated in 2006, A&M had appeared in just one bowl game during his tenure. His amazing athletic ability was never questioned, but his attitude and leadership skills often were, especially toward the end of his Aggie career. There were times when it appeared McNeal could fulfill the lofty expectations, but he simply didn't have the coaching or supporting cast to get it done. Through it all, however, he has little regrets about his time in Aggieland.

"I can't complain about anything that happened at A&M," he said. "I had a blast down there – all four years. The only thing I'm mad about is that we didn't win that much and I didn't get drafted higher. Other than that, my years at A&M were

"It doesn't get any better than to go into the Home of the 12th Man, play in front of over 80,000 and beat the No. 1 team in the nation."

great. They took care of me, loved me and they still do."

In 2006, Cincinnati selected McNeal in the sixth round of the NFL Draft as a wide receiver. As a rookie, McNeal played in every preseason game but was cut right before opening day. He was signed to the practice squad and added to the 53-man roster in mid-September. His NFL debut came on November 19. He remained in Cincinnati until September 1, 2007, when the Bengals released him yet again.

Some might say McNeal never got a fair shake in Cincy, but no matter what happened, he continues to work for another shot at the NFL.

"Life isn't fair," he admitted. "You're dealt some cards that you've just got to play with. From the day I left Cincinnati, I have never stopped working. I have never given up on myself."

In October 2007, McNeal signed with the Toronto Argonauts of the Canadian Football League, but was cut almost two weeks later. He got another chance with the team in March 2008 and has been a solid contributor at wide receiver ever since.

"It's fun to play here," he said. "The community is great. The fans are great. The weather is great. There are beautiful people all around. The league is great and you get paid to play a game that you love."

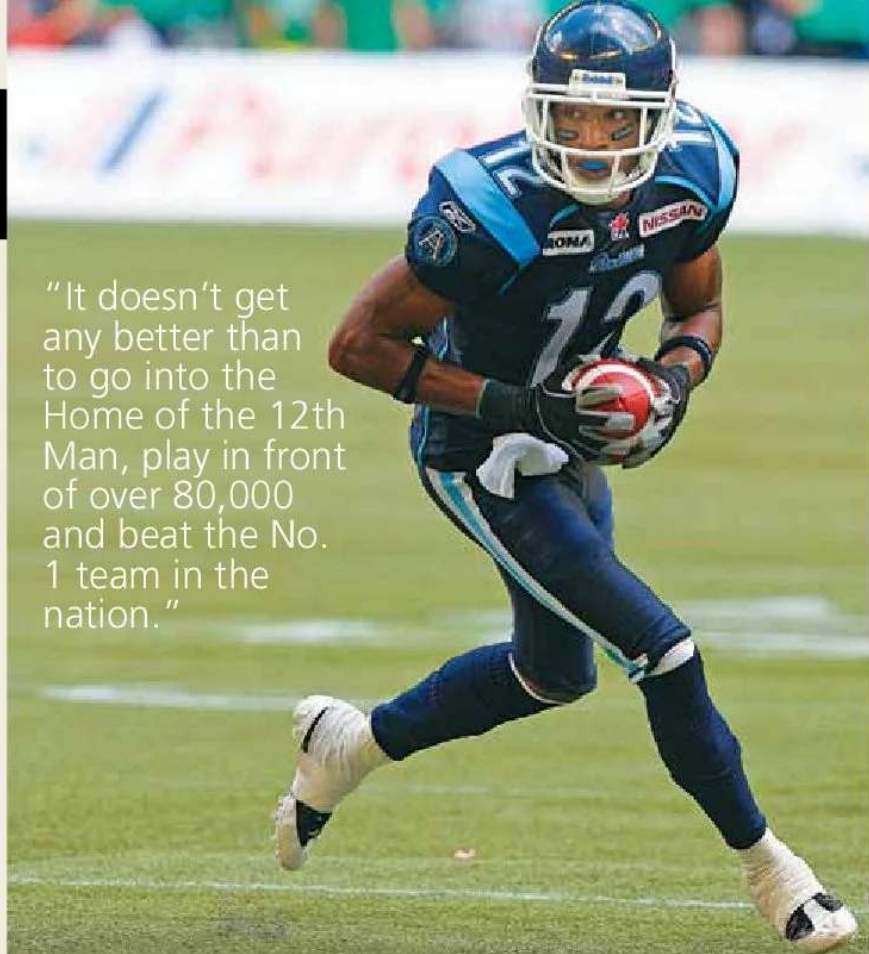
One down side of playing in Canada is that during football season, it's tough to keep up with the Aggies. However, McNeal admits he does plan to make at least one game at Kyle Field later this year.

"We've got some time off and I've got to check out A&M's schedule to see how it's going to work out," he said. "I'm going to talk to Coach Cassidy before I come back."

While he hasn't given up his aspirations of returning to the NFL, for now, McNeal is content to showcase his talent in the CFL.

"Right now, I'm just focused on this season and the rest will follow," he said. "If I have a good year this year, I feel like it will work out for me."

Although his career at A&M wasn't what many had hoped for, most Aggies would be proud to see McNeal get another shot at fulfilling his dream in the NFL. **MI**



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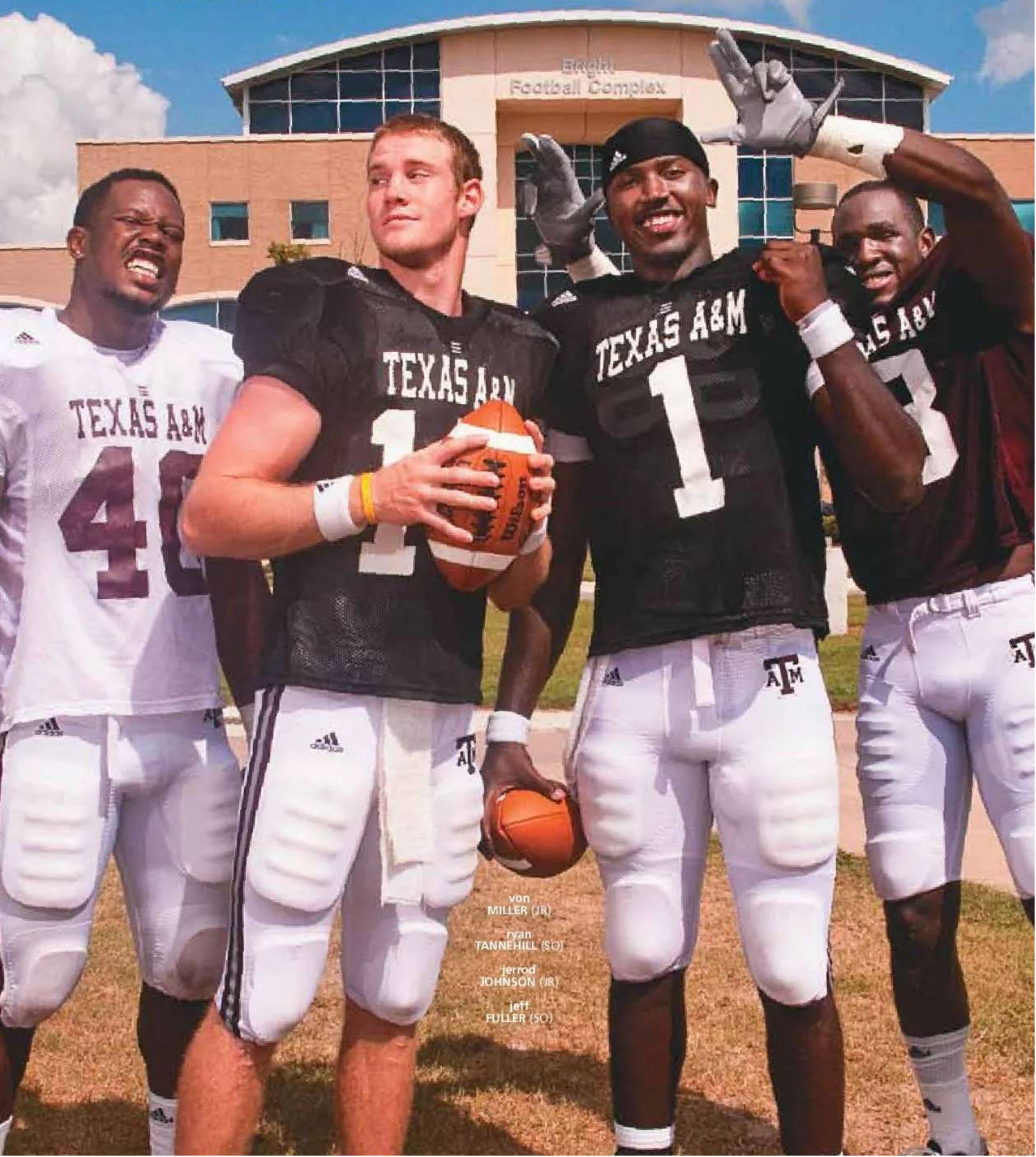


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2009 FIGHTIN' TEXAS AGGIE FOOTBALL PREVIEW

BY JEREMY KSIONDA '04



von
MILLER (JR)

ryan
TANNEHILL (SO)

jerrod
JOHNSON (JR)

jeff
FULLER (SO)



jerrod
JOHNSON (JR)



ryan
TANNEHILL (SO)



tommy
DORMAN (FR)



SPOTLIGHT

#1 Jerrod Johnson QB
6-5 243 Jr. Humble HS

Unquestioned leader of the Aggie offense looks to build upon his 2,435-yard and school record 21-TD passing performance last season.

qb

In one of the most talked about position battles of Fall Camp, junior **Jerrod Johnson** and sophomore **Ryan Tannehill** have emerged as the unquestioned leaders of the Aggie offense. Johnson, who saw the majority of last season's snaps after a Stephen McGee shoulder injury, appears to have held off Tannehill for the starting nod. After spending time in the offseason with former Aggie QB Kevin Murray, Johnson's mechanics and intermediate passes are better than ever. Last year, Johnson became the only A&M quarterback to pass for over 400 yards in a game. If he can limit turnovers and stay healthy, Johnson could rewrite the record books this season.

Despite leading the Aggies in receiving yards in 2008, Ryan Tannehill will probably see limited time at wide receiver this year, as the sophomore signal caller has proven that he could quite possibly be an even better quarterback than wideout. Considering the distance between Tannehill and a third quarterback, in addition to the fact that a number two quarterback took the majority of the snaps last season, an injury to the sophomore would be a potentially devastating blow. Redshirt freshman **Tommy Dorman** has struggled a bit with his consistency, but did receive some good reports during scrimmages. While it's encouraging to see the young quarterback get the job done when the lights come on, it's also critical that he learns to show the coaches his ability to operate the offense on a daily basis.

AI TRIVIA QUESTION #1

Who holds the school record with 48 career passing touchdowns?

- a. Gary Kubiak
- b. Corey Pullig
- c. Kevin Murray
- d. Reggie McNeal

Find trivia answers in an ad in this magazine.



cyrus
GRAY (SO)



bradley
STEPHENS (SO)



christine
MICHAEL (FR)

rb



SPOTLIGHT

#33 Christine Michael RB

5-11 206 Fr. Beaumont West Brook HS

Highly touted freshman running back can be the "X-factor" for the Aggie offense this season, and seeks to be the first 1,000 yard back since 2003.

While there might not be an abundance of experience returning at running back, there's certainly no shortage on talent. **Cyrus Gray** has returned with a sense of purpose, as the sophomore back seems to hit the holes harder and has displayed improved vision that only comes with a year of experience under your belt. He'll need every advantage possible to hold on to his starting position, though, as ballyhooed recruit **Christine Michael** appears ready to give Gray a run for his money. Simply put, Michael is in a category all by himself in terms of being the total package at running back. Whether he's in routine drills or 11 on 11 situations, Michael absolutely attacks whatever obstacle appears in front of him.

Behind Gray and Michael (who can probably be considered co-starters at this point), sophomore **Bradley Stephens** is another back who has managed to put together a nice camp this fall. Like Gray, Stephens is a shifty back with great vision, whose

only problem has been ball protection. Right behind Stephens is true freshman running back **Kalvin Guyton**, who has been one of the most pleasant surprises so far. A rock-solid 201 pounds, Guyton just seems to do all the little things well, which typically gets rewarded in terms of playing time. It will be interesting to see if Guyton plays his way out of a redshirt this season.

AI TRIVIA QUESTION #2

The Aggies set an NCAA record, running up 319 yards of _____ against North Texas in 1946.

- a. first-half total offense
- b. first-quarter total offense
- c. total rushing yardage
- d. punt-return yardage

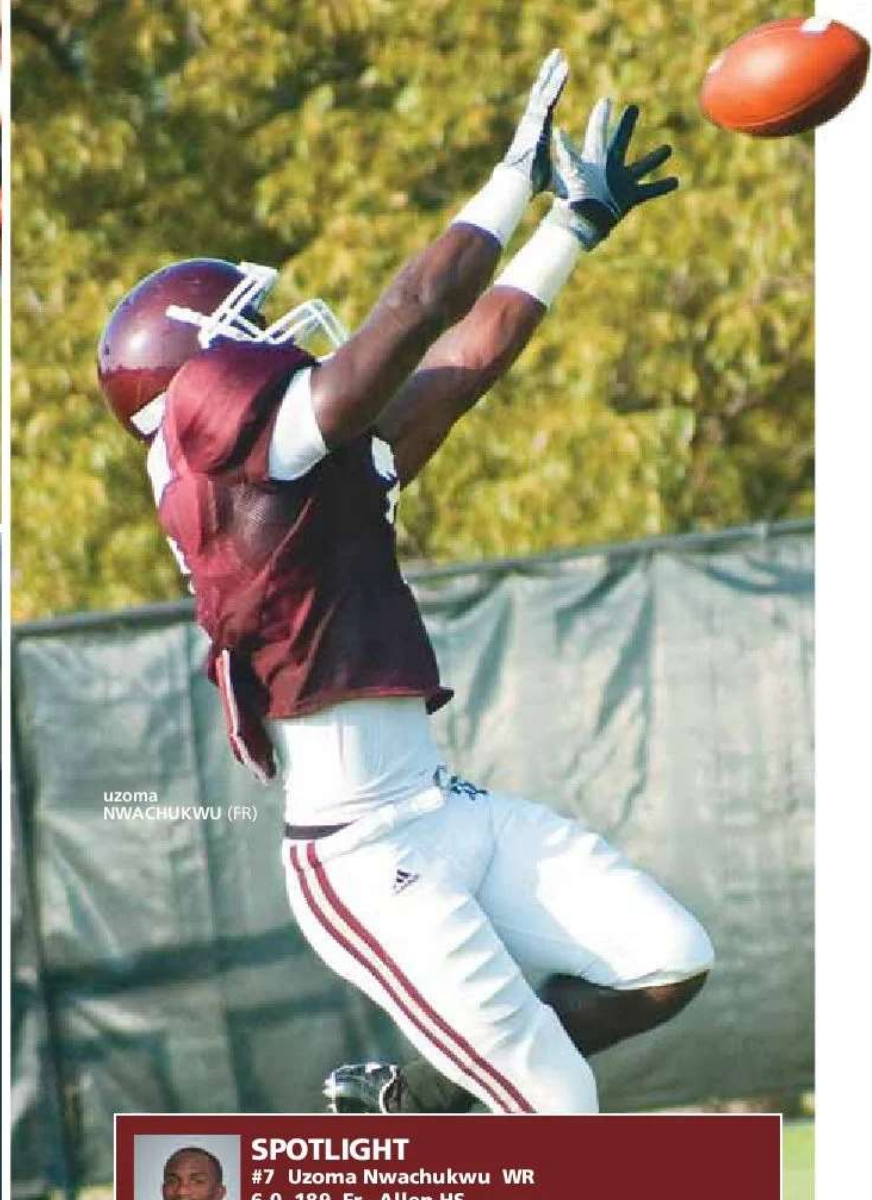
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jeff
FULLER (SO)



terrence
MCCOY (JR)



uzoma
NWACHUKWU (FR)

wr/te

At wide receiver, the Aggies are led by record setting sophomore **Jeff Fuller**. As a true freshman, Fuller posted more touchdowns in one season (9) than any other wideout in A&M history. If this fall has been any indication of how the season will go, it's quite possible that the young receiver will break his own record, among others. At the beginning of two-a-days, senior **Howard Morrow** and junior **Terrence McCoy** lined up alongside Fuller to form the starting unit for the receiving corps. Morrow looks like he has the most to prove this season, as the senior put in extra hours during the offseason to drop 15 pounds and is in the best shape of his career for his final year.

When it comes to playing time, the older veterans will have to fend off a bevy of youngsters itching to make their mark. True freshmen **Brandal Jackson**, **Kenric McNeal** and **Uzoma Nwachukwu** each made tremendous strides during fall camp, and all three should see the field this season. Nwachukwu was particularly impressive, and could find himself in the starting lineup

from day one. If these freshmen can produce on Saturdays as much as they did in camp, the coaches will be able to conserve **Ryan Tannehill** as much as possible.

At tight end, **Jamie McCoy** looks to build upon his 500-yard, 5-touchdown performance last season. The 246-lb senior caught at least one pass in every game last year, and he continued to be a primary target for Jerrod Johnson and Tannehill in camp. Junior **Kenny Brown** made the move to tight end this fall, but he'll be pushed by true freshman **Hutson Pringle** for second team reps.



SPOTLIGHT

#7 Uzoma Nwachukwu WR
6-0 189 Fr. Allen HS

A state champion in high school, his speed and athleticism allowed him to quickly move into the first string offense, complementing standout Jeff Fuller well.

AI TRIVIA QUESTION #3

Who was Texas A&M's first All-American?

- a. John Kimbrough
- b. Joe Boyd
- c. Joe Routt
- d. Marshall Robnett

Find trivia answers in an ad in this magazine.



brandal
JACKSON (FR)



jamie
MCCOY (SR)



kenric
MCNEAL (FR)



huston
PRIOLEAU (FR)



howard
MORROW (SR)



SPOTLIGHT

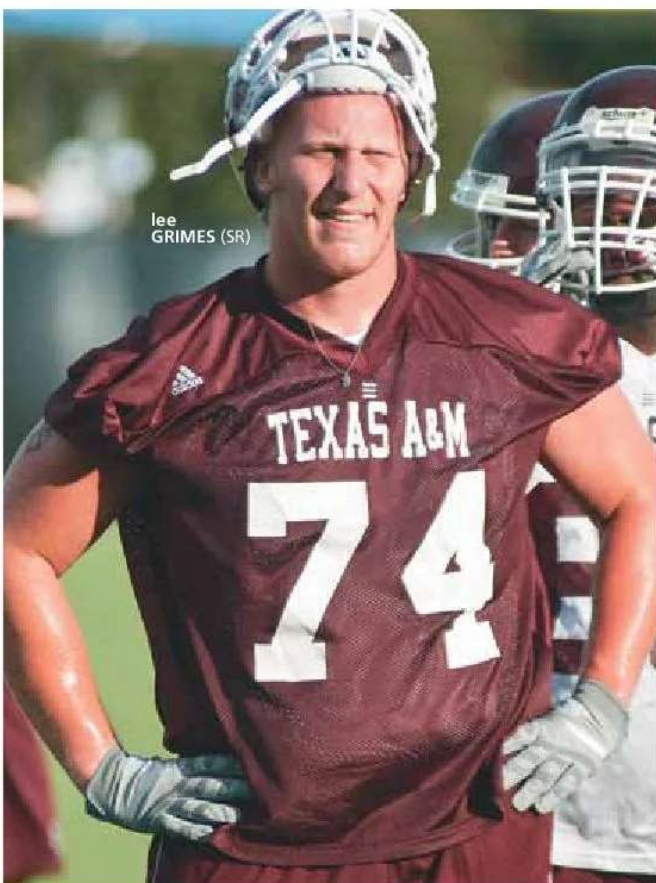
#80 Huston Prioleau TE

6-4 253 Fr. Fort Worth All Saints Episcopal HS

Private school star has quickly turned into a weapon in the passing game and is improving every day as a blocker.



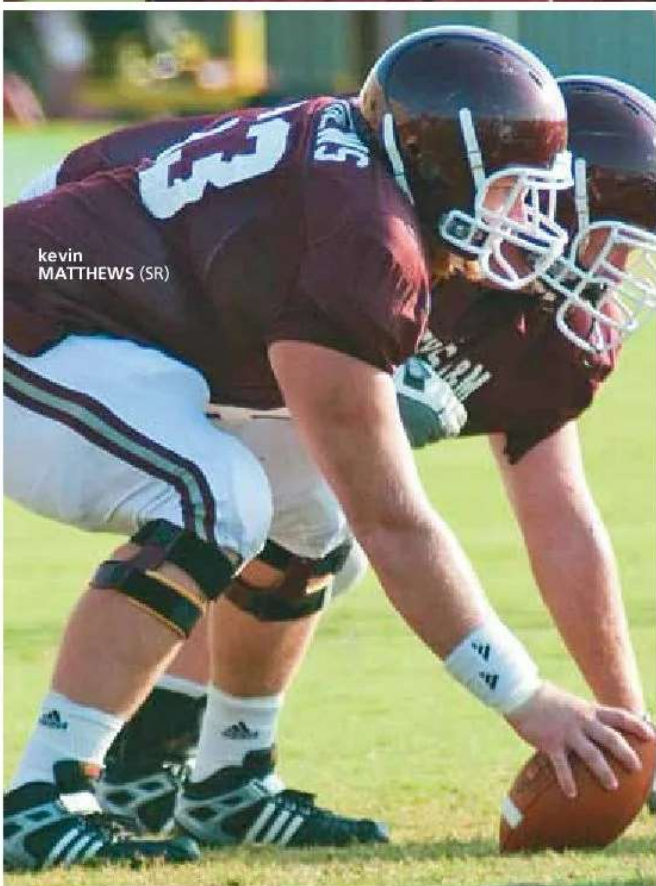
matt
ALLEN (JR)



lee
GRIMES (SR)



michael
SHUMARD (SR)



kevin
MATTHEWS (SR)

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SPOTLIGHT

#55 Danny Baker OT
6-5 300 So. Elkins HS

Went from journeyman along the line last season to starting left tackle during fall camp. If he has a good season, so will the Aggie offense.

ol

For the first time in what seems like an eternity, the Aggie offensive linemen were healthy for two-a-days. There's experience among the group, as seniors **Lee Grimes**, **Kevin Matthews** and **Michael Shumard** along with sophomore **Evan Eike** logged significant playing time in 2008. However, despite multiple returning starters and a host of experience, questions still surrounded the unit throughout fall camp.

Shumard was able to slide back to guard – his natural position – and he'll start alongside Matthews, who has been pegged for the Rimington Trophy's "watch list" – an award given to the nation's top center. **Matt Allen**, a junior transfer from LSU, should start at the other guard slot, giving the Aggies a solid group of upperclassmen on the interior line. True freshman **Patrick Lewis** can back up both guard spots and center, and could eventually push for a starting position later in the season.

On the exterior, offensive tackle is a little more shaky. The Ags gave junior converted defensive lineman **Lucas Patterson** a look at left tackle early in two-a-days, but the experiment got mixed reviews. That combined with a lack of depth at defensive tackle forced the Aggie coaches to move Patterson back to the other side of the ball. Sophomore **Danny Baker** appears to have won the left tackle position, but keep an eye on true freshman **Stephen Barrera** as the season progresses. Grimes rounds out the starting unit at right tackle.

AI TRIVIA QUESTION #4

In 1968, Texas A&M and Arkansas played 184 plays in a single game without a _____ for an NCAA record.

- a. forward pass
- b. turnover
- c. penalty
- d. punt

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danny
BAKER (50)



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SPOTLIGHT

#83 Tony Jerod-Eddie DT

6-5 300 So. DeSoto HS

Probably has the most upside of any Aggie defensive lineman since Johnny Jolly. Added good weight in the offseason and never lost a step.

dt

A load of lettermen lost and a shift in defensive philosophy have left the Aggies searching for answers along the defensive line. Between attrition and graduation, seven players are gone from last season's roster, including Kellen Heard, Ben Bass and Billy Chavis. Fortunately, sophomore starters **Tony Jerod-Eddie** and **Eddie Brown** return up front, and many insiders believe that Jerod-Eddie has as much upside as any player on the team. Backing up the sophomore defensive tackles are a pair of redshirt freshman, **Adren Dorsey** and the highly touted **Rod Davis**. True freshman **Kirby Ennis** will also vie for playing time this fall, as the Hunstville native has shown the ability to produce a disruptive pass rush.

The defensive line got an added boost midway through camp when veteran **Lucas Patterson** moved over after his trial period at left tackle ended. Patterson's return to the d-line will give the Aggies some experienced depth at the tackle position – a huge need considering every other backup has never played a down of college football.



tony
JEROD-EDDIE (SO)



lucas
PATTERSON (JR)



kirby
ENNIS (FR)



eddie
BROWN (SO)

AI TRIVIA QUESTION #5

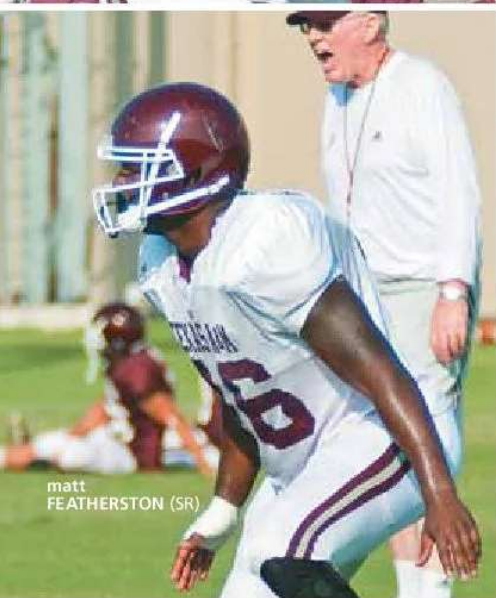
Texas A&M led the nation in total defense (fewest average yards allowed per game) in which year?

- a. 1979
- b. 1985
- c. 1991
- d. 1998

Find trivia answers in an ad in this magazine.



matt
MOSS (SR)



matt
FEATHERSTON (SR)



von
MILLER (JR)

de/jack

At defensive end, senior **Matt Moss** has earned the starting nod after showing improvement toward the end of last season. The junior college transfer carries a large burden, as it will be absolutely essential for him to put pressure on the quarterback. Pushing Moss is true freshman **Spencer Nealy**, who showed great promise in the Texas High School Coaches Association All-Star game this summer. That performance carried over into fall practice, where Nealy impressed the Aggie coaches with his non-stop motor. Sophomore **KJ Williams** made the move to

defensive end from tight end, and junior **Cody Williams** will be called upon to provide depth.

After running a 4-3 defense last season, the Aggies have implemented a hybrid defensive end/linebacker position called the “Jack” in an effort to put speed on the edge. The position was seemingly created for junior **Von Miller**, who has absolutely wreaked havoc on the Aggie O-line this fall at the newly formed position. Jerrod Johnson said that Miller “ruined practice” many times this fall with his ability to put pressure on the quarterbacks and consistently break down the Aggie offense. If Miller is applying the same heat to opponents in October that he did to his teammates in August, Aggie fans could be chanting “Wrecking Crew” come November.

Backing up Miller is senior **Matt Featherston**, who has benefited from the newly formed position as well. While Miller’s niche is on passing downs, Featherston seems to shine when going up against the run. After Featherston, a pair of true freshmen, **Andrew Weaver** and **Aaron Arterburn**, provide depth at the “Jack.”



SPOTLIGHT

#40 Von Miller JACK
6-3 240 So. DeSoto HS

His 3.5 sack season total from last season was broken every other day in practice this fall. Also emerged as a vocal leader during camp.

AI TRIVIA QUESTION #6

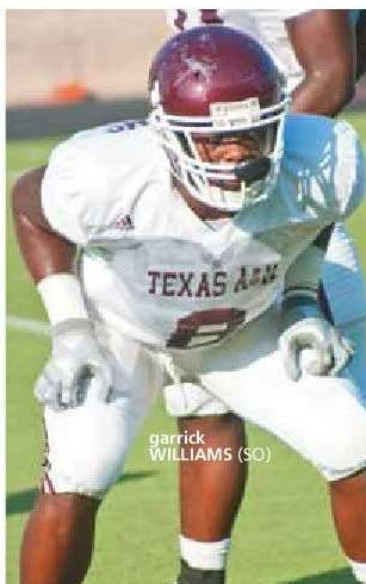
Which Aggie defender had five sacks in a single game against Houston in 1987?

- a. John Roper
- b. Alex Morris
- c. Aaron Wallace
- d. Ray Childress

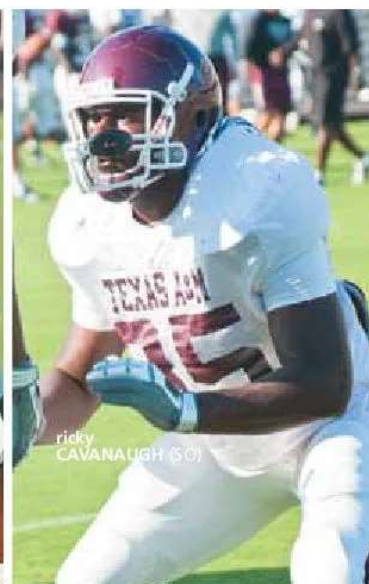
Find trivia answers in an ad in this magazine.



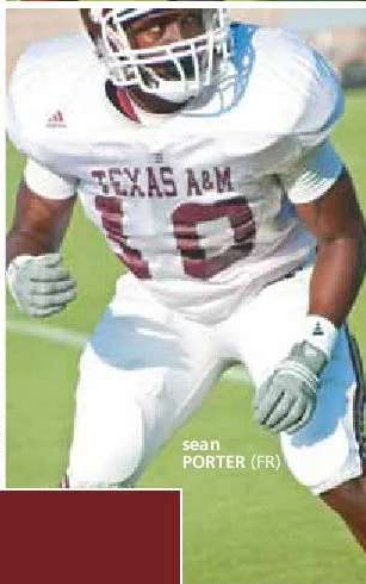
kyle
MANGAN (FR)



garrick
WILLIAMS (SO)



ricky
CAVANAUGH (SO)



sean
PORTER (FR)



jonathan
STEWART (FR)



SPOTLIGHT

#18 Kyle Mangan LB
6-2 231 Fr. Brenham HS

Moved from offense to defense in the spring and hasn't looked back. Mangan's instincts and tackling ability are second to none.

lb

The Aggies signed a host of linebackers in February, expecting the majority of them to contend for early (if not immediate) playing time. The coaches got a pleasant surprise, however, when their returnees rose to the challenge this fall and didn't give up the starting spots so easily. In the middle, redshirt freshman **Kyle Mangan** continued to build upon his impressive spring performance and locked down the starting job in early August. Mangan not only elevated his play this fall, but also emerged as a leader on the Aggie defense – a trait that defensive coordinator Joe Kines undoubtedly loved to see from his starting middle linebacker. Senior **Anthony Lewis** dropped some weight in the offseason, and has managed to fend off freshman **Michael Lamothé** for second team duties thus far.

On the outside, sophomores **Garrick Williams** and **Ricky Cavanaugh** are among the most improved players on the Aggie defense. Both came a long way in providing both run support

and pass protection. They'll have to continue their level of play to keep their jobs, however, as true freshmen **Jonathan Stewart** and **Sean Porter** are breathing down their necks. While Stewart has tremendous physical upside, it's Porter who has shown the most promise early on. The San Antonio native will almost certainly see action in the season opener.

AI TRIVIA QUESTION #7

In 1941, Bill Sibley set the NCAA record for most interceptions by a linebacker in a single season. How many did he have?

- a. 6
- b. 9
- c. 12
- d. 16

Find trivia answers in an ad in this magazine.



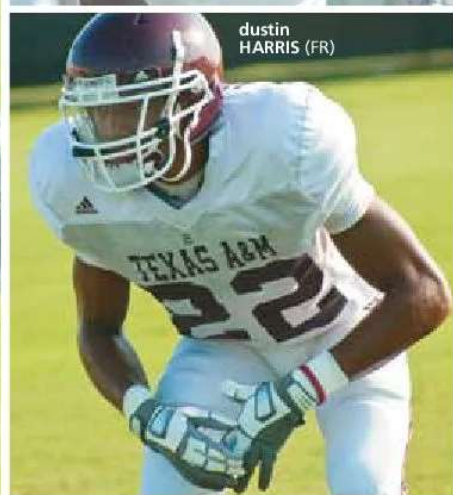
terrence
FREDERICK (SO)



coryell
JUDIE (JR)



steven
TERRELL (FR)



dustin
HARRIS (FR)



SPOTLIGHT

#7 Terrence Frederick CB
5-10 180 So. Katy HS

Started 6 games as a true freshman last season and is likely to start every game this season. T-Fred was the team's best corner throughout camp.

AI TRIVIA QUESTION #8

Which Aggie team was ranked No. 1 in the country before losing its last three games?

- a. 1982
- b. 1976
- c. 1957
- d. 1948

Find trivia answers in an ad in this magazine.

db (cb/s)

If there were only three positions to fill in the secondary, the Aggies would be in great shape heading into the '09 season. Sophomore **Trent Hunter** and senior **Jordan Pugh** are the trusted staples of the Aggie defense at both safety positions. Hunter has been nearly flawless so far this fall, and looks poised to build upon his promising freshman campaign. And Pugh looks physically like a pro. He's our pick to be the most improved player on the entire A&M squad this season. At corner, sophomore **Terrence Frederick** plays well beyond his years, and spent most of two-a-days engaged in epic battles against Jeff Fuller.

Beyond those three, however, things



trent
HUNTER (SO)



SPOTLIGHT

#1 Trent Hunter S
5-10 187 So. Katy HS

Finished third on the team with 65 tackles last season and intercepted three passes. This sophomore plays defense the way defense was meant to be played.

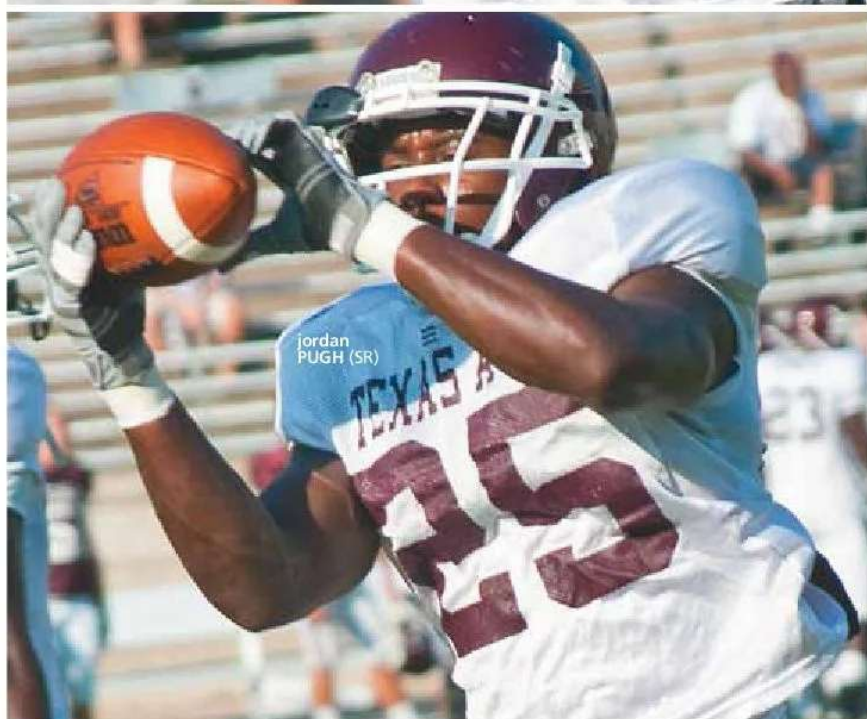
tend to get tricky. While a cloud of uncertainty hovers over the other starting cornerback spot, there's plenty of room for optimism. In a rare stroke of luck, junior college transfer **Coryell Judie** was cleared to play for the Aggies midway through fall camp. Judie's experience and ability should be a huge boost for the Aggie secondary. Senior walkon **Justin McQueen** performed well at the position, but missed time with an injury. Meanwhile, true freshmen **Dustin Harris**, **Dez Gardiner** and **Steven Terrell** gained valuable experience as the Aggies awaited Judie's arrival.

AI TRIVIA QUESTION #9

Who made the tackle on a Hail Mary at the 1-yard line to force overtime in the 1998 Big 12 Championship game?

- a. Dat Nguyen
- b. Jason Webster
- c. Brandon Jennings
- d. Toya Jones

Find trivia answers in an ad in this magazine.



jordan
PUGH (SR)



SPOTLIGHT

#28 Randy Bullock K
5-9 210 So. Klein HS

Made 6 of 7 field goals last season and 20 of 21 extra point attempts. Most reliable Aggie kicker since Kyle Bryant.



ryan
EPPERSON (FR)



ken
WOOD (SO)



randy
BULLOCK (SO)



dustin
HARRIS (FR)



st (k/p/kr/pr)

For the first time in a long time, the Aggies return a proven kicker in **Randy Bullock**. The sophomore looked like a seasoned veteran this fall, as he boomed field goals with accuracy and consistency from both short and long yardage situations. Freshman **Kyle Serres** has shown a nice leg and will study under Bullock.

At punter, the departure of longtime starter Justin Brantly has left a huge void. Freshman **Ryan Epperson** was a late addition to the '09 signing class and is engaged in a heated battle with backup QB

Jeff Wood and Montana transfer **Ken Wood**. While all three have struggled with consistency, Ken looks to have the strongest leg and appears to be the front-runner for the starting job.

In the return game, true freshman **Dustin Harris** has emerged as a weapon on punt returns. The elusive young playmaker has fielded punts with the most consistency, and flashes great vision once the ball is in his hands. **Cyrus Gray** rewrote the Aggie record book last fall in kickoff returns, amassing 1,169 yards on

49 returns for a 23.9 average. He'll likely be joined by freshman **Ryan Swope** this year in the return game to provide a dynamic one-two punch. **AJ**

AI TRIVIA QUESTION #10

All-American Steve O'Neal set an NFL record in 1969 with a _____ punt.

- a. 62-yard
- b. 71-yard
- c. 79-yard
- d. 98-yard

Find trivia answers in an ad in this magazine.



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BUDDY WYATT - DEFENSIVE LINE
CHARLES MCMILLIAN - DEFENSIVE BACKS
VAN MALONE - DEFENSIVE BACKS

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BRYSON (SR)
#25 JORDAN
PUGH (SR)



FS

#20 STEPHEN
CAMPBELL (FR)
#1 TRENT
HUNTER (SO)



SS

#11 JONATHAN
STEWART (FR)
#35 RICKY
CAVANAUGH (SO)



OLB

#36 ANTHONY
LEWIS (SR)
#18 KYLE
MANGAN (FR)



MLB

#10 SEAN
PORTER (FR)
#8 GARRICK
WILLIAMS (SO)



OLB

#4 CORYELL
JUDIE (JR)
#22 DUSTIN
HARRIS (FR)
#21 JUSTIN
MCQUEEN (SR)



CB

#23 STEVEN
TERRELL (FR)
#7 TERRENCE
FREDERICK (SO)



CB

#46 MATT
FEATHERSTON (SR)
#40 VON
MILLER (JR)



JACK

#77 LUCAS
PATTERSON (JR)
#19 EDDIE
BROWN (SO)



DT

#42 KIRBY
ENNIS (FR)
#83 TONY
JEROD-EDDIE (SO)



DT

#99 SPENCER
NEALY (FR)
#55 MATT
MOSS (SR)



DE

WR



WR



#5 HOWARD
MORROW (SR)
#81 KEJRIC
MCNEAL (FR)
#25 RYAN
SWOPE (FR)

LT



LG



C



RG



RT



TE



WR



#8 JEFF
FULCER (SO)
#23 BRANDAL
JACKSON (FR)

RB



QB



#32 CYRUS
GRAY (SO)
#33 CHRISTINE
MICHAEL (FR)
#20 BRADLEY
STEPHENS (SO)

#1 JERROD
JOHNSON (JR)
#17 RYAN
TANNEHILL (SO)

OFFENSE

NOLAN CROMWELL - OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR
TOM ROSSLEY - QUARTERBACKS
RANDY JORDAN - RUNNING BACKS
JIM TURNER - OFFENSIVE LINE
KIRK DOLL - TIGHT ENDS, SPECIAL TEAMS

SPECIAL TEAMS

K

#28 RANDY
BULLOCK (SO)
#31 KYLE
SERRES (FR)

P

#26 KEN
WOOD (SO)
#36 RYAN
EPPERSON (FR)

PR

#22 DUSTIN
HARRIS (FR)
#4 CORYELL
JUDIE (JR)

KR

#32 CYRUS
GRAY (SO)
#22 DUSTIN
HARRIS (FR)

KR

#25 RYAN
SWOPE (FR)
#7 UZOMA
NWACHUKWU (FR)

09.5.09 NEW MEXICO LOBOS

LAST SEASON: 4-8, 2-6 IN MOUNTAIN WEST

OVERVIEW:

Aggies can relate with New Mexico fans this season. The Lobos are beginning a rebuilding job under new head coach Mike Locksley. The offensive coordinator at Illinois for the past four seasons, Locksley took over after Rocky Long stepped down last November. The first-time head coach has his work cut out for him to turn the program around. In addition to getting players to adjust to his system, he has to replace star running back Rodney Ferguson, who gashed the Aggie defense last season for 144 yards and 2 touchdowns. The Lobos are hoping highly touted freshman running back Desmond Dennis will help fill the void.

AI'S PREDICTION:

Last season's opening game loss to Arkansas State might have you concerned about this one – and understandably so – but Mike Sherman got his first win as a college head coach against a likely better Lobo team on the road last season. **A&M 38, UNM 21**

SCHEDULE:

Sep 5 at Texas A&M
Sep 12 Tulsa
Sep 19 Air Force
Sep 26 New Mexico State
Oct 3 at Texas Tech
Oct 10 at Wyoming
Oct 24 UNLV
Oct 31 at San Diego State
Nov 7 at Utah
Nov 14 Brigham Young
Nov 21 Colorado State
Nov 28 at TCU

SERIES HISTORY:

2008: Aggies, 28-22
1926: Aggies, 63-0



09.19.09 UTAH STATE AGGIES

LAST SEASON: 3-9, 3-5 IN WAC

OVERVIEW:

Utah State is also breaking in a new coach and for good reason – they haven't had a winning season in 12 years or won more than 3 games in a season in 6 years. After last year's dismal season, the Aggies fired their coach and hired former Utah assistant Gary Andersen. The team returns 18 starters from last season and is expected to have an improved defense. However, the offense has struggled and will likely continue to as they learn a new system. Keep an eye out for junior quarterback Diondre Borel and senior linebacker Paul Igboeli. Borel is a playmaker with his arm and legs while Igboeli is undersized, but a big hitter.

AI'S PREDICTION:

This one's easy – the Aggies are finally guaranteed a victory! Which Aggie team is the question, of course, and the answer is that Texas A&M should be able to win on talent and depth alone. Surprisingly, these Aggies have never met in football. **A&M 42, Utah St. 17**

SCHEDULE:

Sep 3 at Utah
Sep 19 at Texas A&M
Sep 26 Southern Utah
Oct 2 at Brigham Young
Oct 10 at New Mexico State
Oct 17 Nevada
Oct 24 Louisiana Tech
Oct 31 at Fresno State
Nov 7 at Hawaii
Nov 14 San Jose State
Nov 20 Boise State
Nov 28 at Idaho



09.26.09 UAB BLAZERS

LAST SEASON: 4-8, 3-5 IN CONFERENCE USA

OVERVIEW:

UAB enters the season picked to finish last in the Conference USA East division (11th out of 12 teams). The heart and soul of the program is quarterback Joe Webb, who is one of just two returning players in the country who passed for 2,000 yards and rushed for 1,000 yards. The 6-4, 220-pound junior accounted for 21 touchdowns last season and a slew of jaw-dropping plays along the way. Webb has a solid group of wide receivers to work with, and junior tight end Jeffery Anderson is one of the players on the preseason watch list for the 2009 John Mackey Award, which honors the nation's top collegiate tight end.

AI'S PREDICTION:

The Blazers will only go as far as Webb can take them, and his ability to run and throw will be a huge early test for the A&M defense. The Aggie offense, however, should put up big numbers against a UAB defense that is full of question marks. **A&M 48, UAB 27**

SCHEDULE:

Sep 5 Rice
Sep 12 Southern Methodist
Sep 19 at Troy
Sep 26 at Texas A&M
Oct 1 Southern Miss
Oct 17 at Mississippi
Oct 24 at Marshall
Oct 31 at UTEP
Nov 7 Florida Atlantic
Nov 14 at Memphis
Nov 21 at East Carolina
Nov 28 UCF



10.3.09 ARKANSAS (in DALLAS)

LAST SEASON: 5-7, 2-6 IN SEC

OVERVIEW:

Players and fans of both schools are eagerly awaiting the inaugural Southwest Classic, not only for the opportunity to renew a rivalry, but also to play in the best facility in the world. Bobby Petrino has highly touted Michigan transfer Ryan Mallett under center this season, while the Razorbacks return almost every contributor to an offense that was 1 of 4 in BCS conferences to feature a 1,000 yard rusher and average more than 250 yards passing per game. Defensively, there is even more experience with 9 returning starters.

AI'S PREDICTION:

Arkansas hosts Georgia and visits Alabama before facing A&M, so they could either be riding high or reeling when they get to Dallas. The Hogs have much more speed than what the Aggies will have seen, and there's also the question of who better handles the atmosphere. The Ags just don't match up well in this one, but hopefully they'll prove us wrong. **Arkansas 34, Ags 20**

SCHEDULE:

Sep 5 Missouri State
Sep 19 Georgia
Sep 26 at Alabama
Oct 3 Texas A&M (in Dallas)
Oct 10 Auburn
Oct 17 at Florida
Oct 24 at Mississippi
Oct 31 Eastern Michigan
Nov 7 South Carolina
Nov 14 Troy
Nov 21 Mississippi State
Nov 28 at LSU

LAST TWO MEETINGS:

1991: Aggies, 13-3
1990: Aggies, 20-16
Arkansas leads all-time series 38-24-3





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Top 10 Moments

FROM A UNIQUE PRESS CONFERENCE

BY JEREMY KSIONDA '04

The night before the start of fall practice, Texas A&M head coach Mike Sherman held the first “team meeting” at his home, and was gracious enough to extend the invitation to media as well for a preseason press conference. Because of its unique nature – the press conferences are typically held in the Bright Complex – we felt it was only fitting to give each of you a closer look at the evening’s festivities. We’re happy to bring you our top 10 moments from the night before the first day of practice:

1. The sheer hospitality of Sherman and the entire Athletic Department.

While the warm welcomes at the Bright Complex are always appreciated, Sherman opening up his home to us lowly media types was an extremely kind gesture. Players, coaches and representatives of the athletic department all did a great job of making us feel welcome.

2. True freshmen Hutson Prioleau and Spencer Nealy canoeing behind Sherman as he addresses the media for the first time this season.

As Sherman stood in front of a crowd of microphones, video cameras and journalists from across the state, a pair of true freshmen snuck into canoes and began paddling around in the pond directly behind Sherman. Though he surely sensed what was going on behind his back, Sherman never broke composure.

3. Von Miller and Garrick Williams tumping over in a canoe.

Like Nealy and Prioleau, the DeSoto duo of Williams and Miller decided to get out in the canoes and have some fun on the water. This pair of teammates, however, were not so graceful. Just a few moments after they cast off, a loud “splash” was heard and an eruption of laughter after the defenders tumped over their canoe and fell in the water in their street clothes. Very funny moment.

4. The Food.

After he addressed the media, Sherman invited everyone to help themselves to the team dinner that had been prepared. To our surprise – steaks, potatoes, rolls, cobbler and Blue Bell awaited us. Needless to say, nobody walked away hungry.

5. Watching offensive coordinator Nolan Cromwell – the hoops star.

If you know anything about Cromwell, you’re probably fully aware that he was a tremendous athlete at the University of Kansas and in the NFL, earning All-American and All-Pro accolades at each level. But to our surprise, Coach Cromwell also has a pretty mean jumpshot, as he sunk basket after basket in a game of horse against a staff member.

6. The outdoor fireplace and impromptu NCAA Football matchups that ensued around it.

As we helped ourselves to the buffet line, we overlooked a massive outdoor fireplace that was housing a television and gaming system for the evening. The players and coaches challenged one another to some NCAA Football matchups and battles looked pretty intense, but we were a little more interested in the food at that point.

7. The slam dunk competition.

We should have seen it coming. The same bas-



ketball goal that Coach Cromwell played horse at earlier later played host to a slam dunk competition among the football players. Too bad Mark Turgeon didn’t get to join us, as I’m sure he would’ve been glad to pick up some nice athletes for the practice squad.

8. Cannonballs

Since they were already wet, Miller and Williams made the best of the situation and were the only players to jump into Sherman’s pool. Miller made the biggest waves, which seemed only fitting since he made the biggest splash later on in the week, as well.

9. The first glimpse of the physical transformation of the Aggie football players.

You’ve probably read about it from every other media source there is by now, but this was our first look at how much the players had changed their overall physique since we saw them last. Everyone from linemen to linebackers, to running backs and safeties, looked trimmer, stronger and simply in overall better condition than any A&M team in recent memory.

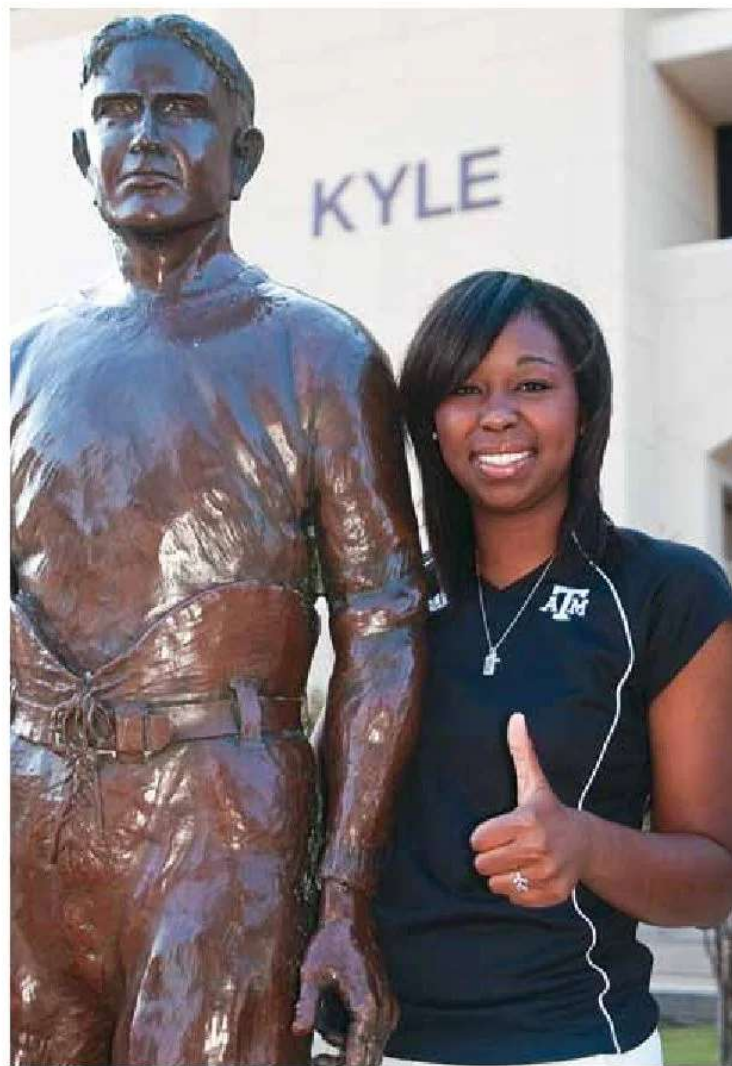
10. The overall camaraderie among the players and coaches.

There was just as stark of a contrast between the attitudes of the players as there was their physique. Whether it was at the dinner table, throwing horseshoes or just hanging out, there was a sense of camaraderie among the players and coaches that was extremely refreshing. There was a feeling of family and an increased level of respect that was evident from the moment we arrived. We’re not sure how it will translate on the football field in terms of wins and losses, but we can guarantee that this team will look, act and compete at a level all Aggie fans are certain to appreciate. **A1**

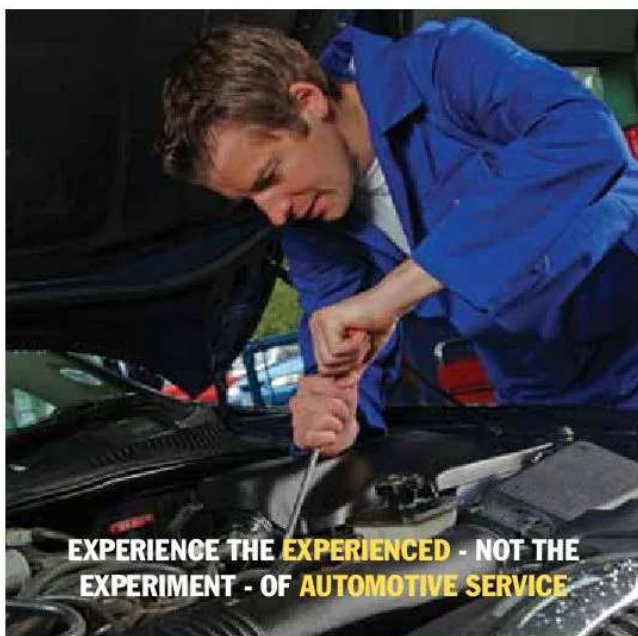
the12thman

faces OF AGGIELAND

BY JASON MCCONNELL '01



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In 10 years I'll likely be a teacher, working at an accounting firm, a mom... Only the Lord knows!

Why I love A&M: There are so many reasons why I love Texas A&M. I love that I can get a great education here, I love that there are so many organizations to get involved in and I love the traditions that make our school what it is today. But my favorite thing about A&M is definitely the people that go to school here. Even though we are all different, we share a common love for our University and I think that amazingly brings everyone together.

Favorite tradition: Muster.

Movies I can't live without: My Best Friend's Wedding and Remember the Titans.

Music I can't live without: John Legend.

TV shows I can't live without: The Office.

One misconception about the Hostesses: The Aggie Hostesses primary responsibility is to promote Texas A&M football. We do this through a variety of ways, whether it be helping the coaches with paperwork in the office or working football summer camps. Some people believe that we have alternative motives for wanting to be around the football program, but honestly we are all just here because of our love for Aggie football.

Hardest thing about being a Hostess: I enjoy everything we do and without a doubt we have an incredible group of girls this year who are a joy to be around. It is not really work if you like what you're doing!

If I wasn't a Hostess, I would have to get a sports pass.

Typical game day: The Aggie Hostesses arrive to the football office about three hours prior to kickoff. We then split up and a number of girls attend the Spirit Walk while the remainder are assigned stations, ranging from checking in recruits to working in the Fan Zone. About an hour before the game starts, the Hostesses go to the sidelines to make sure all the recruits and families stay off the field and then we go to our seats before the game starts to watch the Aggies BTFO whoever we are playing.

Besides the Aggies, my favorite sports teams are the Seattle Seahawks and The Houston Texans.

I like to spend my weekends outside.

Strange and unusual fact about me: I wish my life could be a musical.

My friends would be surprised to know that I: well I like to talk a lot so I think my friends know more than they need to about me.

If I had more time I would take a cooking class.

Favorite food: chicken.

Five people I would like to have dinner with: Jesus, Shaquille O'Neal, C.S. Lewis, Martin Luther King Jr. and Mother Teresa.

Pet peeve: Eating in the restroom.

If I could have a superpower, it would be to fly.

If I won the lottery, the first thing I'd buy is food for people who don't have any. **AI**

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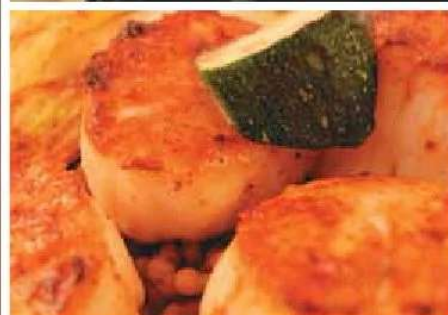
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HOME GROWN

BY KATIE MCCONNELL '09



Wade '99 and Nathan Barkman grew up in a military family and lived everywhere from Germany to New Mexico. So, how did these brothers end up opening The Republic – one of Aggieland's finest restaurants? The answer is simple really – grilled peanut butter sandwiches that their mother used to make.

Wade's passion for food seemed to begin almost as soon as he could talk – his first word was “chocolate.” A self-proclaimed one-time “closet chef,” Wade discovered his passion for cooking in the 8th grade. Not too long after, he realized that the beauty of cooking laid in the instant feedback you receive. An enthusiastic baseball fan, Wade says that when it comes to cooking, “if you swing and you miss, at least you're swinging.” His positive and proactive mentality has helped develop The Republic into the successful fine dining restaurant that it is.

The Republic is a family affair, resting on the backbones of the Barkman brothers. Wade, a powerhouse in the kitchen and Nathan, a marketing, photography and web design guru (to say the least), make up the dynamic duo that can commonly be found buzzing around the restaurant. Even mom and dad are involved almost on a daily basis by phone from New Mexico offering their input, ideas and encouragement.

Growing up, Wade and Nathan could typically be found enjoying family cultural nights – an evening full of delectable samples of food and beverages from the culture of choice. It's safe to say that their love of fine food and great dining experiences began at home. To the Barkman family, restaurants have always been the landing pad in their lives.

“With a family that is going a thousand different directions, restaurants always seemed to be where we were able to stop and

meet,” Wade said.

Despite traveling all over the world, Wade's only real connection with A&M was through a family friend who was an Aggie. That is until he attended one of his mother's speeches at Rudder Tower. She has a doctorate in 18th Century Women's Literature and gave speeches at every major university in the country.

“I missed all of them except for the one at A&M,” Wade admits. “I ducked out during the speech and went in the MSC. I took one look around at all of the beautiful people and knew that was where I wanted to go.”

After earning his business degree from A&M, Wade attended the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York. Following graduation in 2002, he studied at some of the finest wineries and vineyards in the world in Napa, California. From there, he moved to Las Vegas and managed fine dining restaurants at Caesar's Palace and the Wynn Hotel.

At every stop along the way, Wade was gaining more knowledge and experience to help achieve one of his goals in life – to have his own restaurant by the time he was 30 years old.

“When your mother calls you at almost 29 and asks, ‘Don't you have to quit, move, build and open before you turn 30?’ then you know it's time to get going,” he said.

Wade decided that fine dining was a great excuse to come back to Texas, and he knew Aggieland was the perfect choice. Meanwhile Nathan, then managing editor of the Bristol Bay Times in Dillingham, Alaska, agreed to partner with his brother in creating an exceptional restaurant for Aggieland. With a flurry of creative licensing, The Republic opened its doors for the first time on May 8, 2007. Wade turned 30 in June.

Beyond their business intellect and restaurant talent, the loyalty between the Barkman brothers is the sturdy foundation that The Republic rests on. But their loyalty extends beyond the family to the community.

"It's bred into you at A&M that you give back, however you can, you give back," Wade said. "I do restaurants; Nate does all the photography you see while you are here. That's how we give back."


The Barkman brothers have put their passion for great dining into every detail of the restaurant. With the warm décor, Nathan's photography on the chestnut walls and a plethora of sophisticated style, every seat at The Republic is a good seat. That, coupled with good service, live music, and phenomenal food, makes the experience a memorable one.

"Everything happens in restaurants," Wade explains. "...Anniversaries, 1st dates, proposals, business meetings. Everything happens in restaurants."

Winners of the prestigious 2009 AAA Four Diamond Award, Wade and Nathan have created an exceptional restaurant that seems to be able to transport you to other worlds. At the same time, they pride themselves on buying all of their food from within the state of Texas, unless something just isn't available.

"Food will take you anywhere you want to go," Wade said.

So what is one of Aggieland's top executive chef's favorite thing to cook?

"Anything that knocks people's socks off." 



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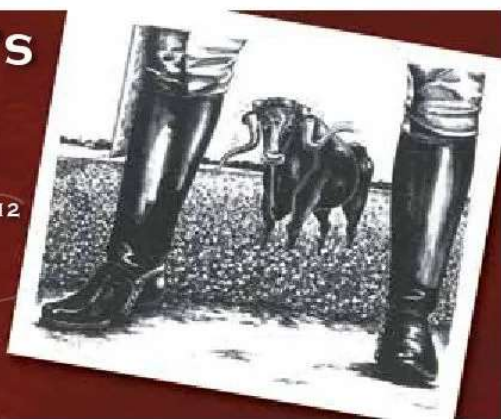
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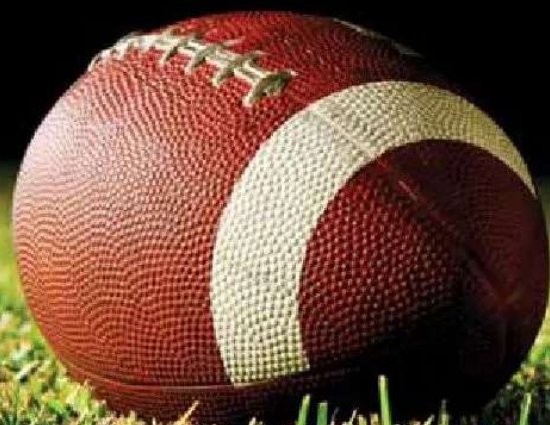
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